

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 PRS-01 CCO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:REBUTLER:REB
APPROVED BY PA/M:CWFREEMAN,JR.
S/S-O - MR. GOLDSMITH
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
PA, S/S, S/PRS

-----063229 191903Z /45

P 191844Z JAN 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 015018 TOSEC 010092

FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL THURS-
DAY JANUARY 19 HEADED "A BUMP IN THE ROAD TO PEACE."

2. BOTH ANWAR SADAT'S IMPULSIVE DECISION TO RECALL HIS
FOREIGN MINISTER FROM THE POLITICAL TALKS IN JERUSALEM
AND MENAHEM BEGIN'S BLUNT TALK THE NIGHT BEFORE AT A
DIPLOMATIC DINNER FOR MIDEAST NEGOTIATORS HAVE TO BE
PUT DOWN TO THE INEXPERIENCE OF EGYPT AND ISRAEL IN
PEACE-SEEKING. WE SAY THIS NOT MERELY BECAUSE WE
BELIEVE THAT MR. SADAT AND MR. BEGIN HAVE MADE A COM-
MITMENT TO NEGOTIATIONS THAT NEITHER CAN ABANDON UNTIL
ALL POSSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED; CERTAINLY TALKS
IN THEIR SECOND DAY CAN'T BE SAID TO HAVE FAILED. WE
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SAY IT ALSO BECAUSE IT IS SIMPLY UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT
THE TWO TO PUT ASIDE OVERNIGHT ATTITUDES AND ANTAGONISMS
AND ANXIETIES BUILT UP OVER THREE DECADES OF DISTRUST
AND WAR.

3. ON JAN. 4 AT ASWAN, PRESIDENT CARTER SECURED MR.
SADAT'S AGREEMENT TO LANGUAGE ON SETTLEMENT PRINCIPLES

THAT MR. BEGIN AT ONCE INDICATED MIGHT SATISFY ISRAEL.

IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, HOWEVER, IN APPARENT REACTION TO POLITICAL PRESSURES WHOSE SOURCE IS NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR, MR. SADAT NOTICEABLY HARDENED HIS OWN PUBLIC LANGUAGE. MR. BEGIN, HIMSELF FAR FROM FREE OF POLITICAL PRESSURE, RESPONDED WITH A DEFIANT STATEMENT ALL THE MORE TROUBLING FOR BEING DELIVERED AT A DINNER ATTENDED NOT ONLY BY THE EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS IN JERUSALEM BUT BY THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE AND 15 CONGRESSMEN. NONETHELESS, THE JERUSALEM TALKS THE NEXT DAY WENT WELL. THE ISRAELI CABINET WAS DELIBERATING ON THE ASWAN LANGUAGE WHEN THE SADAT BOMBSHELL WENT OFF.

3. MR. SADAT'S DRAMATIC STREAK WAS PERFECTLY SUITED TO BREAKING THE ARAB-ISRAELI PSYCHOLOGICAL LOGJAM; IT IS LESS PERFECTLY SUITED TO THE UNAVOIDABLY LONG AND BUMPY HAUL OF NEGOTIATIONS. MR. BEGIN'S EMOTIONALITY COMES NATURALLY TO A VETERAN OF THE UNDERGROUND AND THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION; IT IS NOT THE KIND OF PRECISION INSTRUMENT ONE WOULD RECOMMEND FOR DELICATE DIPLOMACY. TO SAY THIS, HOWEVER, IS NOT TO SAY THAT EITHER SIDE CANNOT LEARN TO COPE WITH THE OTHER'S STYLE AND TO MODERATE HIS OWN.

4. FOR THE UNITED STATES, WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IS NOT TO
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TAKE SIDES. MR. SADAT MAY WELL BE TEMPTED TO SEE IF HE CANNOT CASH IN SOME OF THE POLITICAL CHIPS HE HAS EARNED -- AND EARNED FAIRLY AND ABUNDANTLY -- IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS AND CONVERT THEM INTO AMERICAN PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. THE ISRAELIS HAVE NEVER SHIED FROM USING POLITICAL JUJITSU TO BRING AMERICAN WEIGHT TO BEAR TO THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE. BUT THE AMERICAN REQUIREMENT IS TO HELP THE PARTIES KEEP THE NEGOTIATING GOING, AND THIS IT CAN DO EFFECTIVELY ONLY IF IT MAINTAINS DETACHMENT FROM, AND THE CONFIDENCE OF, BOTH ARABS AND ISRAELIS. NO SOONER HAD MR. SADAT PULLED HIS POLITICAL DELEGATION OUT OF JERUSALEM YESTERDAY THAN MR. CARTER URGED HIM TO RECEIVE THE ISRAELI MILITARY DELEGATION ON SCHEDULE IN CAIRO ON SATURDAY. MR. SADAT AGREED. THE ROAD TO PEACE IS BUMPY -- BUT FAR FROM BLOCKED. END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, PEACE TALKS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE015018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: REBUTLER:REB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780029-0279
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780144/aaaabkuv.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 16e03be2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3746192
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: OVIP, SOPN, PEPR, PDEV, US, EG, IS, WASHINGTON POST, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/16e03be2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014